lity of developing container transhipment facilities at Cochin. The final report has not been submitted.

National Highways in Tamil Nadu

177. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to convert certain State Highways in Tamil Nadu into National Highways; if so, the details thereof and the stage of proposals;

(b) what is the stage of the scheme to form a National Highways Ghat road through western Ghats to link up Trivandrum to Ambasamudram in Tamil Nadu: and

(c) when the work is expected to be taken up for execution and when it is likely to be completed?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) In February. 1989, the Cochin-Madurai Road which covers a distance about 116 Kms. in Tamil Nadu has been declared as a National Highway. No decision to convert any other State Highway into a National Highway at present has been taken.

(b) There is no propsal to develop Trivandrum-Ambasamudram road as a National Highway.

(c) Does not arise.

Purchase of pistols from Szech Company

178. SHRI ASHOK NATH VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had ordered purchase of pistols from M/s Merkurias — Czech Company;

(b) if so, what was the nature of the deal;

(c) whether the deal has been completed; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MUFTI MOHAMMAD SAYEED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) An agreement was entered into with M/s Merkuria of Czechoslovakia for supply of 55,000 numbers pistols 9 mm for the use of police forces in the country. Since samples from the consignments received were tested and not found according to the specifications, the contract with the Firm was terminated. The firm backloaded the defective consignments at their cost.

National Highway between Dindigul and Kottayam

179. SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is an urgent need for having a National Highway between Dindigul and Kottayam in view of the increasing trade and commerce in the border areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, extending from Dindigul;

(b) by when the construction of this important Highway will be taken up: and

(c) what steps Government have taken for immediate survey in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K. P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Dindigul and Kottayam are already connected by a State Road and at present there is no proposal to include this road in the National Highway grid.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.